



HTC CORNER

Worried about your Child getting Homesick?

By Annie Phillips, MSW, LLMSW, Pediatric Hemophilia Social Worker

As a first time staff member at HFM's Camp Bold Eagle this year, I can personally say that your child does not have time to get homesick because they are having SO much fun! Yet, at night as the activities are winding down, homesickness can strike. Here are a few tips to help your child overcome feeling homesick:

- Before sending your child to camp, make sure you have a conversation with them about how homesickness is a completely normal feeling. Homesickness means you have a loving family at home and it is normal to miss them.
- Even if you are having strong feelings of anxiety, do not project those feelings onto your child. Always approach camp with a positive attitude and consistently remind your children about how much fun they will have. Do not say, "If you get homesick I will come get you." This will plant the idea of leaving camp early in your child's mind and cause them to have a negative view of camp before even arriving.
- Encourage your child to have an overnight experience, away from the family, before arriving at camp. This can

help your child gain independence and confidence.

A great way to support your child while they are at camp is to send encouraging mail, highlighting how proud you are of them for going to camp. Mail call is a fun way for kids to know that you are thinking of them and to feel connected to home while they are at camp.

I truly look forward to next summer at HFM's Camp Bold Eagle and can't wait to work with your wonderful children!

Welcoming Us to the Camp Family: A thank you from a med student

By Hasanga Samaraweera, 4th year medical student at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences planning to pursue a career in pediatrics.

The brakes squeaked my car to a stop after nearly 1000 miles. I had arrived at HFM's Camp Bold Eagle all the way from North Dakota. I may have been a random medical student from some far off state, but I was greeted with cheers and smiling faces like I belonged. From that moment, I knew I had come to a place that was different. A place that was special. The staff seemed to have a comfort level with each other that you'd only share with your oldest friends or family. "Family" is a word that I heard almost immediately as I arrived at camp, and at first blush, it seemed like a fairytale description that gets thrown around too easily. But the truth of it became more obvious as we went through staff training and was punctuated by the campfire on the last night before the campers arrived. These people, mere strangers to me three days earlier, were sharing stories that you'd

only share with those most dear to you. The overarching theme that struck me was that most would not be the same people, or possibly even alive, if it wasn't for Camp Bold Eagle and the family it creates. And amazingly, they were inviting all the medical students to join in that family.

The first day of camp, the children piled off the bus so full of life. Excitement was all around, yet I had no idea of the challenges that would lie ahead. I don't think I grasped the gravity of a six year old being away from home for the first time or the constant struggle of young boys trying to push the limits of the adults they've realized are not as infallible as they thought. While nothing grand, I think my friendship with a homesick camper helped him to find moments of joy at camp. I was able to watch his experience transform, with each smile

growing bigger than the last. Though this may not seem like a great victory, camp has shown me that such friendships can impact campers throughout their lives—and certainly counselors as well. I began the path to becoming a doctor because I wanted to help kids when they're in need. Though all I could be was a shoulder to cry on, I found that a small act could still have such a profound impact in the future.

By the end of the month, I was inextricably linked to this family through my friendships with other medical students, counselors, and campers. As those before me had been transformed by camp, so had I. So thank you Camp Bold Eagle for making me a better doctor, person, and advocate for those in need. I think and hope I made a difference too.

